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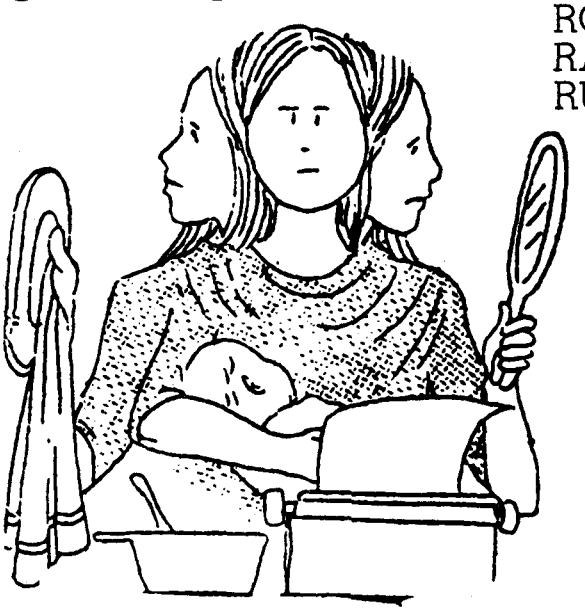
THE CULT OF TRUE WOMANHOOD

ROSEMARY RADFORD RUETHER



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RACISM IN FRANCE?

ALAIN WOODROW

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CORRESPONDENCE

Fetus as Property

Los Angeles, Calif.

To the Editors: Professor Etzioni is wrong when he states [Sept. 21] that the August 15, 1973 federal court ruling, that a woman does not need the consent of her husband to obtain legal abortion, "raises a host of new issues."

A woman is a ratiocinating being. Consequently she has sovereign rights and can not become the chattel of someone else by entering into a legal contract or by any other means. A woman is a sovereign being before entering into marriage, and marriage does not change her status as a sovereign being.

The reason the decision is the woman's is that the parasite is in her body, not the husband's. If the parasite were in the husband's body then the decision would be the husband's and not the wife's. Compulsory continuation of pregnancy is a greater violation of the woman's rights than is rape.

Since Professor Etzioni (and perhaps others of *Commonweal's* readers) does not appear to be aware of the debate on the husband's status that took place in the abortion-on-request movement during 1963 through 1966, I shall summarize the consensus that was reached.

Marriage exists for people; people do not exist for marriage.

It is not reasonable that people should be more alike in their marriage contracts than they are in their religious beliefs.

There should be more than one type of marriage recognized by law. Specifically, there should be more than one type of marriage contract. And more specifically, every marriage contract should state whether or not procreation is an intended purpose of this particular marriage.

1) If a man and woman sign a marriage-for-procreation contract, then A) the husband has contracted to support all of his wife's offspring; and B) if the wife obtains an abortion without the husband's consent the husband may obtain immediate divorce uncontestable by his wife.

2) If a man and woman sign a marriage-not-for-procreation contract, then A) the husband has not contracted to assume financial responsibility for his wife's children; and B) if he should repent this arrangement he may with his wife's consent adopt his wife's children and thereafter share with his wife financial responsibility for his wife's children.

3) If a woman has a child out of wedlock, it should be assumed by the law that she did so by choice and that the sperm donor donated the sperm as a gift and has not in any way obligated himself to support either the woman or her children.

A surprisingly large number of women prefer to have children sans husband, and given the male chauvinism of most men I don't blame them.

Incidentally, passing multiple option marriage contract laws would go a long way toward removing opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment.

People who want lots of children should marry people who want lots of children. People who want few children should marry people who want one or two children. People who don't want children should marry people who don't want children. People who don't want to marry shouldn't marry. And the time to discuss these questions is before the marriage vows are said.

But if by chance these types of questions were not discussed before marriage and incompatible basic differences of opinion are found to exist, the couple should divorce and remarry persons with compatible viewpoints.

The present policy of socially pressuring young people—particularly young women—into marriage and then having them fight out a compromise is ridiculous.

In upholding the family it is important not to make the mistake of rating the idea of the family more highly than the people who are the family. In upholding the family, it is important to remember than an idea can not suffer, but people are quite capable of suffering.

Finally, to answer the title of Professor Etzioni's essay: "The Fetus: Whose Property?" the answer is; *"It makes no difference."* The woman has a moral right to own her own body. Hence, she has a moral right to kill any parasite within her body. And it doesn't matter who owns the parasite.

DON FEDERICK

President, Abolish All Abortion Laws

Birmingham, Mich.

To the Editors: Simon Legree still lives! "The Fetus: Whose Property?" [Sept. 21] demonstrates that once again in America human beings can legally be regarded as objects, to be owned or arbitrarily disposed of. Doesn't the fetus, like the rest of us, have human parents, human anatomy, human physiology, human functions and a human destiny? He is indeed a fellow human being. Professor Etzioni worries that giving a woman unilateral ownership of her unborn child will undermine the marriage contract and the family. Yet he ignores the terrible implications of the original Supreme Court abortion decision. Based on reactionary concepts of absolute property rights, rugged individualism, and social eugenic superiority, it undermines all human relationships by ruling that certain individuals—this time the youngest members of the human family—are without value or privilege. Harriet Beecher Stowe where are you? Slavery is back in style.

PATRICIA NIXON

"Decreating God"

Lakewood, N.J.

To the Editors: Whatever judgment time may pass upon Simone Weil as sociologist, lyricist and wanderer among mystery cults, she was not a saint by either religious or humanist standards (despite what Gide and Silone felt and Fiedler in America declared); her "God" (whatever it is) is not the one known to Christianity or Judaism. There is a nether aspect of her ideology obscured by incessant referrals to deity, a boundless nihilism that raged consumptively at Western images of man and God with the aim of blotting them out, of "decreating"

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them as she quite explicitly explained. This crucial element is not mentioned in Mark Taylor's otherwise attentive and compassionate study ["History, Humanism & Simone Weil," Aug. 24].

She was not given to metaphor. When she wrote "The self is only the shadow which sin and error cast by stopping the light of God" she meant literally that the human self must be decreated by pain and violent death, above all in a state of innocent non-comprehension. It must be so, for God's sake, for "Creation is an act of love and it is perpetual. . . . But God can only love himself. . . . Thus, he who gives us our being loves in us the acceptance of not-being. Our existence is made up only of his waiting for our acceptance not to exist. He is perpetually begging from us that existence which he gives. He gives it to us in order to beg it from us." As for the martyrs who suffered *knowingly*, "The martyrs did not feel that they were separated from God, but it was another God, and it was perhaps better not to be a martyr. The God from whom the martyrs drew joy in torture or death is close to him who was officially adopted by the Empire and afterward imposed by means of exterminations." Simone Weil's Christ however, who has not the remotest connection with Jesus of Nazareth, is of a different order. The act of love in which man is created, and in which he is forced immediately to undergo the ordeal of decreation, is described in these problematic words "Relentless necessity, wretchedness, distress, the crushing burden of poverty, cruelty, torture, violent death, constraint, disease—all these constitute divine love." (Gravity & Grace, pp. 78 & 136.)

Unfortunate Simone Weil!—her crowning absurdity and her tragedy, which must genuinely arouse pity, was her own life. It was inauspicious and not a little inauthentic from beginning to end. "Each time we say 'Thy will be done,'" she wrote, "we should have in mind all possible misfortunes added together." By a happy confluence of events, so rarely granted to other

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ON THE ALERT

In President Nixon's eyes, last week was the seventh, eighth, ninth or twentieth crisis he had boldly mustered through: he had shown the world —and himself—that he was tough.

For the rest of the nation it was a different kind of crisis. There was general agreement that we had seldom seen stranger days. And events broke so quickly—the firing and resignations, the reports of Bebe Rebozo's selling stolen securities and of another Nixon fund, the real possibility of impeachment, the on-again-off-again cease-fires and press conferences, our own mysterious "alert"—that unreflective public reaction seemed almost schizophrenic: part spontaneous laughter, as if we were watching the last-reel chase of a 1930s Marx Brothers movie; part nervous fear—the ominous suggestion that Doctor Strangelove had taken charge and events were out of control.

Henry Kissinger's non-answer to Marvin Kalb's skeptical question about the motivation for the alert said more than he intended: ". . . it is a symptom of what is happening in our country that it could even be suggested that the United States would alert its forces for domestic reasons." Prestige at home and abroad are connected. True to the Shakespearean theme, when the king is sick there is trouble in the state. A nation's foreign policy springs from its culture, from its national character; our ventures overseas will either corrupt or ennoble our spirit at home, and no amount of piety or jingoistic bluster can cover for us when we are morally weak. Kalb, unlike too many timid reporters, asked what was on a million American minds. Kissinger later added that "one cannot have a crisis of authority in a society for a period of months without paying a price somewhere along the line." What kind of "authority" does Kissinger have in mind? Most likely that authority that is propped up by raw power, that allows a sovereign to reign unchallenged and unchecked. Yet it is moral authority, the foundation of all real authority, that his Administration has squandered—including Doctor Kissinger, who went along with the immoral bombings of Cambodia and Hanoi and now stands embarrassed by a Nobel Prize which means about as much as an Academy Award.

If the Soviet Union had actually begun to move a substantial military force to the Mideast, the United States should have answered with a prudent combination of diplomacy and strength. Yet, in recent years, it seems

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the "American way" to respond to minor crises with a force far out of proportion to the alleged offence. For example, in punishment for one bullet hole in the *Maddox* in Tonkin Gulf in 1964, Lyndon Johnson devastated a good part of North Vietnam.

Last week the President responded to "ambiguous" Soviet moves by signaling his former hosts, the Russians, that we were ready for a Third World War. The Administration has yet to demonstrate that the alert was justified. In fact, President Nixon was careful to say in his press conference: "We obtained information *which led us to believe* that the Soviet Union was planning to send a very substantial force. . . ." Was the Administration actually misled, as Leonid L. Brezhnev charged, by "fantastic rumors" of Soviet plans for unilateral military intervention? Within a few hours of the Nixon explanation, the Soviet Union shot back characterizing the alert as an "absurd" attempt at intimidation. Another possibility remains, one that presumes the most cynical interpretation of men and international events: that the Soviet Union, as it did when Nixon mined Haiphong, has allowed itself to be bullied in anticipation of some future wheat deals.

Pathetically, the more Nixon tried to justify the alert, the more questions he raised about his behavior. Apparently invoking the ghost of John Kennedy to sanction his policy, he said this had been the "most difficult crisis" since the Cuban confrontation in 1962. He let us know, several times, how "rough" and "firm" he could be standing up to Brezhnev, leaving "little to the imagination" on how he would react. Yet this is the Brezhnev with whom he says he has such good communication, who knows him so well. If so, why did he have to wind up the war machine to prove his point? Once again he referred to *his* painful decision to Christmas-bomb Hanoi. Small comfort to those killed by the bombs. The tougher it got, he said, the cooler he got. As he went on to blow his cool over the press. But, as every schoolyard psychologist knows, the more the big-kid-on-the-block keeps saying how rugged he is, the less the other kids believe him.

The only way to restore moral authority is to complete the Watergate investigation—particularly those areas where, according to more and more reports, Cox and his staff were beginning to turn up dirt before he was sacked: the milk price rise, the Hughes-Rebozo connection, and the President's personal finances. As even Acting Attorney General Robert H. Bork is already finding out, a special prosecutor under the Executive's thumb will have little chance of getting to the truth. Congress should re-establish the office of special prosecutor and give the job to Cox. Cox was doing his job well, and he should not be disqualified because of Nixon's paranoia. Meanwhile, civic groups, political clubs, high schools, universities, and religious leaders should let Congress know that the people are serious about impeachment. Nor should Congress hurry to confirm Gerald Ford as Vice President. If Congressional leaders are hesitant about Carl Albert's assuming the Presidency, the Democratic majority might consider—with Albert's cooperation—selecting a Speaker who would be so obviously superior to Nixon that the nation could look forward to the transition with confidence. Until these things are accomplished, Nixon's still the one. And insofar as the head of state embodies and symbolizes the state at large, Nixon is us.

LIBERTY, EQUALITY, FRATERNITY

RACISM IN FRANCE?

Are the French racist, as a nation? Most of them would be appalled at the idea. Challenge a Frenchman and he will speak of the French colonial policy of integration, with its system of "overseas territories" whose inhabitants enjoy the full status of French citizenship; he will point out that the racial trouble spots in the world today exist in those countries that have known Anglo-Saxon dominion: the United States, South Africa, Rhodesia; he will remind you of France's revolutionary past and of her motto: Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité.

If it is true that the French, and the Latin races in general, are less overtly racist than the northern, Teutonic races, it is also true that the French are extremely chauvinistic and prone to xenophobia. More than most peoples, the French are convinced that they are the most intelligent and that their way of life is the best; and a foreigner who dares to criticize things French is usually told, sooner or later, that if he doesn't like what he finds in France he can always go home. In private conversation, this sort of reasoning, if arrogant, is harmless enough, but when it is adopted, albeit tacitly, by the Ministry of the Interior as a basis for its dealings with immigrant labor the situation is more serious.

More than three and a half million foreigners live and work in France. In order to do so, they must be in possession of a current resident's card and a work permit. This is a perfectly reasonable, if somewhat selfish, control intended to safeguard the internal labor market. This control becomes abusive, however, in that these permits can be revoked at any moment without warning or explanation, and the foreign worker expelled from the country.

Such expulsions are increasingly frequent, but are usually carried out secretly and remain unknown since the

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victims are powerless to protest. The aim of such measures is usually to remove so-called "troublemakers," i.e., people, who dare to criticize the regime, join trade unions or fight to better their working and living conditions, and to intimidate those who might be tempted to follow their example.

Two recent expulsions created quite a stir, however. In both cases the victim was a "respectable" European, a minister of religion and an influential person enjoying the full support of his community. The first case was that of the Rev. Berthier Perregaux, a Swiss Protestant minister, who was expelled from Marseilles on September 3 for having expressed his solidarity with a group of North African workers threatened with expulsion after the murder of a Marseilles tram-driver by an Algerian (later proved to be insane).

Perregaux, whose work with the migrant workers was carried out at the request of the French Reformed Church, was accused of "having committed serious breaches of political neutrality." All he had done, in fact, was to support a hunger strike carried out by 30 Tunisian workers threatened with expulsion because their documents were not in order. Msgr. Etchegaray, the Catholic Archbishop of Marseilles, demanded that the expulsion order against Perregaux be retracted, and the French Reformed Church said, in a published statement, that "this shows the precarious position of foreign workers in France and the arbitrary way in which expulsions are effected."

The second case is that of Andrew Parker, a Scottish minister who was expelled from Nemours on September 18. Parker, 31 years old, has lived in France for five years, exercising his ministry in the "Mission Populaire Evangélique de France," a Protestant organization created to minister to the workers, similar to the Catholic worker-priest movement. He began by working on a building site, sharing the hardships and poor housing conditions of the foreign laborers; then, in 1971, he was put in charge of a youth center in Nemours, a small provincial town, south of Paris.

Parker conceived his task as helping the poorest, above all. He encouraged workers, drop-outs, young people who had been abandoned by their families and all those living on the margin of society to come to his *foyer* for help and companionship. He also published a bulletin in order that "those who are normally never heard might have a chance to express themselves." The rule was complete freedom of speech, and last Spring he published an article by a young schoolgirl stating that she wanted to burn down her school, and giving her reasons for this.

The article was obviously immature and came at a bad moment, psychologically, as it was published just after a Parisian school had burnt down with several casualties. For some time the activities of the youth center and Parker's "left-wing" ideas had been criticized by the "bourgeoisie" of Nemours, and the publication of this article was seized upon as a pretext to get rid of Parker. A campaign was started against him, led by the mayor of the town, Mr. Dailly, a Freemason known for his anticlerical sentiments. Mr. Dailly brought a lawsuit against Parker for "incitation to arson," and when the court let him off with a slight fine, Mr. Dailly demanded that the minister be expelled.

In spite of the support given to Andrew Parker by local groups, by his religious superiors and by numerous Catholic and Protestant personalities, Dailly's power proved greater (he is a member of the Senate), and the Minister of the Interior decided to expel him from the country. Immediately after this decision, the "Mission Populaire Evangélique" published the following statement:

"All of Andrew Parker's activities are clearly in keeping with fidelity to the Gospel and its necessary political implications. It is evident that the lack of tolerance displayed in this matter is one more proof of the arbitrary way in which foreigners are treated, and one that can only encourage the xenophobia and racism at present dishonoring our nation."

Since Parker's departure, numerous protests have been voiced by Protestant leaders and Catholic bishops against the expulsion of these two ministers and of the countless other unknown foreigners that they represent. There is no doubt but that France's economy needs the millions of foreigners in search of work who flock to her shores, but this does not mean that they can be exploited with impunity. A nation which claims to be inspired by the ideals, equality and fraternity, has a lot to live up to.

ALAIN WOODROW

(Alain Woodrow is Commonweal*'s regular correspondent in Paris.)*

COMING

GREGORY BAUM writes about abortion as an ecumenical dilemma:

"In the Vatican Council Decree on Ecumenism, in the section dealing with the attitude of Catholics to Protestant Christians, we read, 'If in moral matters there are many (Protestant) Christians who do not always understand the Gospel in the same way as Catholics, and do not admit the same solutions for the more difficult problems of modern society, nevertheless they share our desire to cling to Christ's words as the source of Christian virtue.' When Catholics disagree with the teaching on abortion adopted by some Protestant churches and many Christian thinkers, they should respect this Protestant position as an attempt to deal in a Christian way with a difficult moral problem."

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AN OPEN LETTER

PETER STEINFELS

Mr. Michael Novak
The Rockefeller Foundation
111 East 50th Street
New York, New York

Dear Mike,

Please forgive me for breaking into the hustle and bustle of that stronghold of the common man and the urban working class where you are employed, but I have a small complaint.

No doubt there are many matters political and intellectual on which you and I would be in perfect agreement, and some on which we would be in substantial disagreement. But that, for the moment, is not my problem. I am stuck at an earlier stage of the discussion—what used to be called "definition of terms."

Less and less, Mike, are your writings about individuals, issues, and interests which I can recognize —"real toads in real gardens," so to speak—and more and more are they about cosmic confrontations between shadowy, collective actors: the "new class," the "superculture," the "enlightened and affluent," the "urban ethnics," the "media elites," the "radical-liberal elites," and even—God help us!—the "common man."

Every time I try to get my finger on one of these agglomerations it slips away and changes shape. A single column may talk about the "urban working class," the "ethnics," the "white workers," and rank-and-file Democrats as more or less equivalent. Yet many workers are not ethnics, many ethnics are not working class, and many workers and ethnics are not urban. Over a third of the population of Westchester county, one of the wealthier suburban areas in the nation, are either foreign-born or the children of immigrants. *That* is not necessarily typical either; but it indicates the complexities that regularly get washed out in your writings.

On your broken-field running in the matter of "ethnics" we need not dwell. It has been stunning. The Germans weren't ethnics; the Irish were semi-ethnics. The WASPs were anti-ethnics. Then you got nervous about WASPs and made them "British Americans," and invited Southern "rednecks" into the ethnic fold. Muskie was, and then he was not. McGovern was proclaimed the Biggest Ethnic of Them All. And finally we were all ethnics! As you know, I am among those who think the discussion of ethnicity a very significant business—your discussion included—until it turns into a bunch of ideological brokers bidding on political futures in some ethnics commodities market resembling the "pit" at Chicago's Board of Trade.

Perhaps my puzzlement will be clearer to you if I concentrate on your latest column, on "The Northeastern Elite." Don't get me wrong: there is nothing that wakes me up like a good snarl at some wicked elite. But I would like to know exactly who is the object of my snarls. I would like to know, for instance, whether I am snarling at myself—or at you. Your column doesn't help.

Let us begin with a close reading: the "Northeastern elite" is one of the two centers of wealth which run the nation; it is connected with Harvard, Yale, and Princeton. Obviously you are talking about Wall Street and the established Ivy League stock, who are, have been, and always will be *Republican*, whose money supported Nixon over Kennedy in 1960, Nixon over Humphrey in 1968, and Nixon over McGovern in 1972. But no, the "Northeastern elite" is also linked to the academy and working journalists —liberal Democratic strongholds. You say that the "Northeastern elite" staffed the Great Society programs Nixon is dismantling—and yet you name as one of its representatives, Elliot Richardson, who, as Nixon's H.E.W. Secretary, began the dismantling. The "Northeastern elite" also manages to contain the liberal Jews and Southerners at the *New York Times* and the upper-class Middle Americans at the TV networks. Six paragraphs later you write of "Northeastern elites"—plural. One paragraph after that, it is singular again. Then you speak of "Harvard men," a category which includes not only Archibald Cox, but Daniel Moynihan, Henry Kissinger, and, I suppose, you. By the end of your column, the "Northeastern elite" has disappeared altogether, and you announce, "The Northeastern *liberal* is not to be trusted."

Far be it from me, Mike, to suggest that you simply don't know what you are talking about, but whatever it is, it is hard to get hold of. I had thought that the reality of American politics was a good deal more complicated than this schema of two great elites and an unrepresented working class. There is a contest in the Democratic party, for example, between the AFL-CIO and the "new politics" people. Where are the "cowboys vs. patriots" in that? Are the McGovernites (whom Northeastern money did *not* support at all, whom the academy supported uneasily, and the press would have liked to support but didn't) part of the "Northeastern elite"? Is Robert Strauss from Texas a "cowboy"? Where does Ted Kennedy fit in? And "Scoop" Jackson, with his support from labor and the aircraft and oil industries and liberal Northeastern intellectuals like yourself? Where do the Humphrey backers who fled to Nixon fit in? Into which pigeonhole goes I.T.T.? And the American Jewish Congress?

Alexis de Tocqueville wrote that "an abstract term is like a box with a false bottom; you may put it in what ideas you please, and take them out again without being observed."

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THE CULT OF TRUE WOMANHOOD

ROSEMARY RADFORD RUETHER

Does the encounter culture offer any genuine liberation to women?

The home and the family is often assumed to be a primordial unit, shaped to its present form by biological and psychological characteristics that pre-exist and are the foundation of all society. The outcry against any change in the role of women is always based on this assumption of the primordial and unchangeable characteristics of the family. Any changes in the family are treated as the undermining of society as a whole. But this notion of the unchanging family is very misleading because, in actuality, the nuclear family, as we have come to know it, is a product of changes which took place in Europe in the period from the late 15th, to the 18th, century. The family, as it presently exists, is an anomaly in social history, and has a specific compensatory function in relationship to modern industrial society. It is only by understanding these changes that the type of socialization of women in the family in modern society becomes apparent. Only in this perspective can we begin to see the way in which the family functions as the unique realm of herto-sexual intimacy, and woman becomes the high priestess of this realm of "intimacy" over against collective economic and political life.

In traditional societies, marriage was not the union of two persons, but an alliance of two families. It was a tribal alliance for economic and political purposes, and the choice of the two partners involved was secondary, if not irrelevant. Women particularly had little or no choice in whom they married. In medieval Christendom, this was the basic approach to all marriages in the upper class. In addition to this, the Church maintained a negative view toward marriage as a realm of spiritual or moral values. The sexual act, even within procreative marriage, was inherently sinful, redeemed only by its good end in procreation. But the act itself remained essentially debasing, and this debasing character of sex was passed on to the child as the taint of original sin. This view of sex effectively cut off the possibility of viewing sexual communion as real interpersonal communion in any spiritual sense. Love was possible only when divorced from sex and marriage.

By the same token, the family could not be viewed as a spiritual community, analogous to the Church. The Jewish patriarchal view which saw the family as the basic unit of religious community, an idea that it also implied in the New Testament Pastoral Epistles, could not be developed in classical Christianity as long as this ascetic view of marriage prevailed. The truly committed Christian, who wished to worship God fully, could only be a celibate. Marriage was a third-rate option conceded to those weak members of the Church who were unable to rise to the way of perfection. Its purpose was solely for procreation, an unfortunate necessity which did not alter the vile character of the means to this end. Within such a view, the ideal "Christian family," as either a love relationship between spouses or as a community of values where its members were nourished in the faith, could not really develop. The whole image of marriage remained under the negative sign of ascetic anti-sexuality throughout the Middle Ages.

Protestantism was to reject this ascetic view of the inferiority of marriage to virginity. It rejected monas-

ROSEMARY RUETHER *is on the faculty of the Harvard Divinity School. Her most recent book is* Liberation Theology *(Paulist/Newman Press). The above article was adapted from a Frances Younker Vosburgh lecture given by Miss Ruether at Drew Theological School in April of this year.*

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ticism as the Christian way of perfection and restored the Biblical patriarchal view of the family as a realm of religious nurture. In the process, it also championed a new view of conjugality as a love relationship between spouses, although this was not allowed to challenge the traditional patriarchal view of the subordination of women. The marital relation for women was still defined as that of bearing children and being under the domination of their husbands. Yet Protestantism borrowed some of the idealization of love found in the courtly love tradition to soften and idealize the conjugal relationship.

In the medieval tradition, love could exist only as a sublimated, distant relationship with an unattainable woman who represented the spiritual womanhood of the Virgin Mary. Romantic love could only take place outside procreative marriage. The Protestant, particularly the Puritan tradition, began the fusion of romantic love and conjugality. The family was thus enormously elevated in its ideological role in society. No longer a mere unfortunate biological necessity conceded by the Church, despite its debasing nature, marriage now becomes the moral unit of society. It becomes, in Puritan society, a sub-unit of the Church as the community for the nourishment of moral and religious growth. The harsh patriarchal view of women is softened by the glow of romantic love. Catholicism was eventually to catch up with this Protestant development with its cult of the Holy Family and the Childhood of Jesus.

As Philippe Aries has shown in his pioneering book, *Centuries of Childhood,* this new ideology of conjugality and the family corresponded to a slow evolutionary change in the character of the family itself that drastically altered its social role. Marriage in the bourgeoisie did not have the tribal character it had with the landed nobility for whom marriage continued to be a coalition of landed properties to consolidate the economic and political power of landholding families. For the nobility, the only child that was important was the heir. The second son might be sent to the Church. The girls were bartered off in intertribal bargaining. Younger children mingled with bastard offspring and the children of servants. There was little sense of a distinct community of children and parents as a conjugal unit. Children were treated as members of the servant class. They were sent at an early age to act as valets, pages to wait at table and other servant functions toward the adult society. This was their apprenticeship in adult society which began at the age of 7 or 8. At 12 or 13, an academically inclined youth of the more affluent classes was away at the university. There was little notion of siblings as a community to be raised in a close relation to their parents, nor of childhood as an extended period of dependency. Children, from the first, mingled with other children and adults who were not their parents, and at an early age began to contribute to adult society.

As Aries has shown, the modern nuclear family is the result of an evolution that gradually did away with the complex extended family of earlier times. This type of family was pioneered by the bourgeois, while the older types of family existed much longer among the nobility and the poor. It was only in the 19th century that the bourgeois family became the general norm for society as a whole. The heir is no longer distinguished from the younger children, but the younger children are set apart from servants and bastards. Servants and bastards are eliminated from the home or at least placed in a distinct servants' quarters, so they no longer grow up with the legitimate offspring. The home becomes privatized. Its earlier public character as a thoroughfare, in which intimate functions such as childbirth and dressing were treated as public functions, disappeared. Private bedrooms became clearly marked off from more public parts of the house. Servants and retainers no longer slept in the same rooms with the master. The social world was gradually thrust out of the home.

The conjugal family as a community of parents and children withdrew into a new privacy that drew them together as a unit and distinguished them more and more from those who were not immediate members of this privileged unit. Childhood comes to be seen as a separate era of life, clearly distinct from adulthood and entailing a longer and longer period of formation. No longer are they little adults to be thrust into apprenticeship roles in adult society at an early age. Instead childhood is seen as a time of extended innocence and plasticity to be molded by moral guardians. The parents, uniquely the mother, come to be seen as this molder of moral development of childhood innocence.

Earlier, children were not regarded as morally innocent. Born tainted with original sin, they saw and participated in sex early. Now, in the privatized family, childhood comes to be seen as a pre-fallen state, innocent of sexuality and to be kept innocent of it as long as possible. A magic circle of sexual innocence is drawn around womanhood and childhood, and the rough world of raw emotions is thrust outside. The home becomes an Eden of unfallen purity to be protected against the outside world. Mothering now becomes a full-time occupation, and childhood nurturing a lifetime project that is expected to engage a woman's full-time moral and emotional energies. The family progressively loses its earlier social, political and economic functions. But it draws all the more on a newly extended definition of private intimacy and long-term childhood nurture. These now become its chief functions.

This privatization of the home meshes with the alienation of productive functions from the home in industrial development. The home, which was once an intrinsic unit of production, where the basic tools and goods of daily life were made, begins progressively to lose these productive functions. At the same time, male work, once taking place in shops or fields in or around the home,

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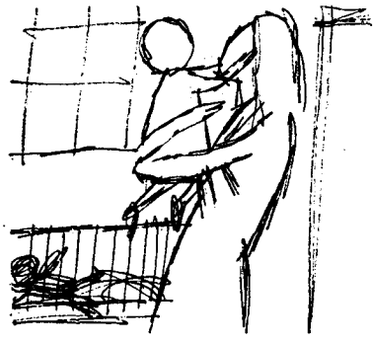
becomes increasingly socialized and alienated from the home place. Women, at the same time, began to lose their own productive work, as well as the integration of their lives with male work. The home was refashioned from a producer to a consumer unit in society. It became concentrated exclusively on interpersonal intimacy and extended child nurture.

With the loss of a servant class to socialized work at the end of the 19th century, the middle-class wife also becomes the domestic servant who frees the male for the industrial workday. A new type of family and a new definition of woman's role as a caste came into being which had not existed in the West in so limited a form. Women, having lost the productive work of the home that was theirs in an earlier society, also lost much of their earlier mobility which allowed them to participate in social production. Poor women, to be sure, were being drawn into factory production at highly exploitative wages and conditions. But the woman entrepreneur, still common in the 17th or 18th century, began



to become a rarity by the 19th century. The ideology of womanhood became concentrated exclusively on their functions in the new bourgeois home. Here they were enshrined in the new privacy of a home whose sole functions were inter-personal intimacy, extended child nurture and the housekeeping functions that freed the male for the industrial workday.

In Victorian times, this ideology of the home as the realm of rest and restoration for work, child nurture and interpersonal intimacy was still imbued with the psychology of sexual repression. The cult of romantic love still demanded that true love be non-sexual. Intimacy and emotionality could only be good if it was "pure," i.e., sublimated and separated from the physical. Thus, the idealizing of domesticity resulted in a view of childhood and womanhood that was non-sexual. Children were supposed to be "innocent" until adulthood. But for women, this childhood innocence became their permanent identity. Girls were supposed to know nothing of sex until marriage, and even then were supposed to remain as detached from their unfortunate biological roles as possible. Only by remaining the lifelong sexual innocent would woman be transformed into that "Mother" who, in turn, was to nurture a new generation of innocent children. Women and children were set apart in the unfallen Eden of a-sexual purity.

The bourgeois Wife and Mother partook of all the aura of the Virgin Mary and the Lady of courtly love. In her, the Immaculate Conception and Virgin Birth became everyday miracles. Conceived without sin, Woman could represent, in the 19th-century ideology, unfallen Humanity; that ideal essence of humanity which was to inspire men and uplift them from the sordid world of material getting and spending. Although mother of many children, she was innocent of her own biology and was incapable of participating in or feeling sexual pleasure. Sexuality became exclusively the male sphere, a sign of his brutish nature, whereas pure womanhood could serve only as a passive vehicle of male sexual pleasure. The very fact that children were produced by sexual intercourse between the parents became the well-concealed scandal of every Victorian household. This conspiracy of sexual innocence in the bourgeois home governed the conditioning of the female mind and, in turn, the upbringing of the children. Women were swathed in garments that made them unrecognizable as two-legged creatures, and even the legs of furniture were clothed in petticoats to conceal their shocking similarity to human limbs. No bodily organ or function could be even known, much less mentioned in polite society. Women were shaped to be the walking ideologies of this bourgeois society: half angel, half idiot.

This ideology of the cult of True Womanhood, of which the 20th-century Feminine Mystique is a linear descendant, played a crucial compensatory role in the new industrial society that was being formed. Although building on earlier Mariology and the cult of courtly love, it arose in its 19th-century form as a part of the romantic reaction against revolution, industrialism and their attendant threats to traditional values. The Home and Womanhood were to be everything which this modern industrial world was not; they were to compensate for everything threatened by the changes in public relations. Here in the Home, patriarchy and the rights of birth still held sway as the natural aristocracy, even though this concept was everywhere else overthrown in democratic politics. Here the childhood world of fixed certainties could be maintained in a modern world of skepticism. Here emotionality and intimacy held sway in a world dominated outside by unfeeling technological rationality. Here sublimated spirituality combated the crude materialism of industrial competition. Here an island of beauty, trees and flowers was walled off from the ugly world of factories. Here voluntarism and personalism reigned over against an alienated world where men were the cogs in the machine of an impersonal universe. Above all, the Home was the realm of piety and nostalgic religiosity, cultivated by women, to which men repaired to comfort their spirits against the insecurity of

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a new world governed by scientific rationality that left little place for the old faith.

Women were the high priestesses of this atavistic world of the Home; the bulwark against industrial society. Women were to be, above all, religious, to nurture faith in a religion in which men no longer believed, but wished to believe that they still believed. They were both the incarnation and the dispensers of that tranquilizing religiousness which Karl Marx called the opiate of the people, but which the bourgeois voluntarily imbibed to inoculate themselves against the threatening world of insecurity, doubt, anomie and social restiveness. This demanded that women remain pre-critical and incapable of sharing the world of rational culture that was eroding these certainties. For a woman to become intellectual and skeptical in this way was a shocking rebellion against all that was holy. An irreligious woman was a moral monster.

But woman was not only the chief "tranquilized tranquilizer." She herself takes on the dimensions of a kind of deity in 19th-century thought. It becomes common to speak of the Home as a shrine and of woman as a Goddess enshrined therein. As Comte puts it in his glowing vision of future industrial society:

> Positivism encourages the full and systematic expression of feelings of Veneration for Woman. . . . Born to love and to be loved, relieved from the burdens of practical life, free in the sacred retirement of their homes, the women of the West will receive from Positivists the tribute of deep and sincere admiration which their life inspires. They will feel no scruple in accepting their position as spontaneous priestesses of Humanity. . . . From Childhood each will be taught to regard their sex as the principal source of happiness and improvement. . . . Men in all the vigor of their energies, feeling themselves the masters of the known world, will feel it their highest happiness to submit with gratitude to the beneficent power of womanly sympathy. In a word, Man in these days will kneel to Woman and to Woman alone.
>
> (Ch. 4, p. 287-8) of Comte's
> "Influence of Positivism on Women"

In 19th-century ideology, Womanhood takes the place of Christ as the epitome of the new cult of Humanity. The idealized essence of Man becomes the religion of the 19th-century theology. If man himself came to see himself as too ambivalent for this role, woman, as the idealized essence of pure and moral human nature, became elevated as the symbol of idealized Humanity.

But this idealization of woman has effectively removed her from the real world of men as had her earlier denigration. It was said that women were too pure, too noble to descend into the base sensual world of public business. To step out of her moral shrine in the Home to vote, to work, to campaign, all this would sully her purity and remove from her that veneration that she derived from her sequestered role in the Home. This "down from the pedestal" argument became the chief means by which social conservatives of church and society argued against every effort of the new women's movement to break out of the home, and refuted every woman's issue, from legal rights to education to suffrage. This very idealization also meant that woman existed essentially to nurture morality and spirituality in men. Her whole being was a "being-for-others." To claim that a woman was a self-defining person who had, in any sense, of being for herself, a self of her own to fulfill, was the prime heresy of the Cult of True Womanhood. When Nora slammed the door in Ibsen's play, *A Doll's House,* and declared that she had an autonomous self to fulfill, the sound reverberated throughout the entire house of

Victorian culture. Feminists in England were even spoken of as "Ibsenites."

Woman's being was defined essentially as that of sympathy, service, self-giving, just as the male was defined as the autonomous self-defining, active self, who needed to be nurtured and elevated by this feminine sympathy. Woman's moral superiority was freely conceded and even divinized, but only in an auxiliary relation to an autonomy which was still defined as exclusively male. Woman indeed played her "elevating role" only by being totally submissive and self-giving and purging herself of all self-will. As the *Young Lady's Book* summarized the virtues of women: "It is certain that, in whatever situation a woman's life is placed from her cradle to her grave, a spirit of obedience and submission, pliability of temper and humility of mind are required of her."

The virtues of humility and submission are seen as the highest virtues, the "Christian virtues." Christianity then is seen as intrinsically feminine. But this very morality of obedience and submission demands an ethic for women which denies them any being, any selfhood of their own. Again, the Ideology of true Womanhood reveals itself as secular Mariology. Every woman can be

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the Virgin Mary, elevating crude maleness to higher purity and delicate emotions, precisely because she herself has abnegated herself completely before the will of the Patriarch. As Eliza Farnham put it in her discourse on female superiority: "The purity of woman is the everlasting barrier against which the tides of men's sensual natures surge."

This idealized and privatized sphere of feminine virtue and the Home functioned as the antithesis and bulwark against that "real world" which now became exclusively defined by commercial values. This creates a peculiar reversal of the traditional dualism of male spirituality and morality and female "carnality." The male world, in 19th-century ideology, now becomes the "material world." But this material world is understood as the "real world"; the world of hard, practical aggressivity, devoid of sentiment or moralizing. This male world is still seen, however, as the realm of the intellect. But this is reduced to cause-and-effect rationality and loses the feminine quality of Wisdom. This is the workaday world of the Victorian male, from which he repairs to the idealized world of the "Home," where all moral and spiritual values are confined.

This split between the public realm of work, as the sphere of material relations and functional rationality, and the "Home," as the feminine sphere of morality and sentiment, had a devastating effect on both women and the quality of public culture. Not only did this new schizophrenia forge new arguments to forbid women from stepping outside the Home, but it also diverted women's education into those humanistic spheres which both unfit them and give them little inclination to compete in this type of male world. On the other hand, moral virtues were sentimentalized and privatized, so they ceased to have serious public power. The feminizing of Jesus, which was typical of the 19th-century imagery, and the segregation of religion in the suburban sector both reflect the retreat of religion to the Home. Even humanistic education and the arts began to suffer the same fate of privatization, while the world of business and government was given over to a technological rationality.

This split between rationality and morality, fact and value, was unwittingly expressed in Reinhold Niebuhr's antithesis between 'moral man' and 'immoral society.' Altruistic morality belongs to the private sphere. It is appropriate only to person-to-person relations exemplified by marriage. In the world of politics and business, such morality is "unrealistic." Here the limits of justice are found in the balancing of the clash of competitive egoisms. Women are the symbol of the private sphere of love; they exemplify "moral Man." Women are moral, and men are rational, in a way that is emptied of morality. Morality becomes sentimentalized, privatized and identified with the feminine sphere of the "Home." Those who try to apply such moral judgments to politics and business are unrealistic, sentimental and ultimately "effete," i.e., "effeminate." Bomber pilots who have no "sentimental scruples" about "doing their job" are "manly," while those who suffer imprisonment or exile for conscience are "effete."

The Victorian cult of True Womanhood was clearly a class ideal. In its image of the delicate woman who belonged in the Home, it studiously ignored the fact that large numbers of poor women were working inhuman hours for pitiable wages in factories. Its sublimated leisure culture for the affluent bourgeois Lady was built on a world of repression; both sexual repression, which found its outlet in a proliferation of houses of prostitution, and the repression of the working class, whose exploited labor was the underpinnings of the middle-class society. This lower class was imaged as a world of bestial appetites and irrational mob instincts. All the sentimental efforts to restore traditional ruling-class values ultimately aimed at keeping this lower world in its place. These two forms of repression intermingled because the poor woman, who could scarcely survive on the wages of the factory, often ended by turning to prostitution. Since the Cult of True Womanhood made the leisured, bourgeois woman normative, the plight of working women could only be viewed as a downfall from the sanctity of the Home. Its true character as the underside of Victorian repression and exploitation went unnoticed.

By the turn of the century, the contradiction between an intensified domesticity and a sexuality repressive culture became so violent that the underside of Victorian society exploded in the Freudian revolution. At first, Freudian revelations about the repressed sexuality that was the underside of Victorian "purity" were regarded as a great threat to Home and Womanhood. The Age of the "flapper" saw a social revolt against the whole heritage that denied sexual experience to middle-class women. But the sexual revolution in the United States was soon reintegrated into the psychology of the bourgeois family as an integral part of its maintenance. The sexual revolution corresponded to the transformation of capitalism from its earlier sexually repressive work ethic to consumerism. The eroticization of the home and the private sector of life generally became quickly harnessed to consumer capitalism to stimulate its chief function as the primary consumer unit. Women became the chief buyers and the sexual image through which the appetites of consumption are to be stimulated to buy the products of consumer society. Women became a kind of self-alienated "beautiful object" who sell consumer goods to themselves through the medium of their own sexual image. The home becomes the voracious mouth to be stimulated by every sensual image to devour the rapidly obsolescent products of consumer capitalism.

The eroticization of the home and leisure life is also stimulated in capitalist society to compensate for and pacify the alienation of work and the loss of control over

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public political and economic processes. Women must be kept in the world of leisure and culture all the more to service this need for pacification of work alienation. Women become not only the housekeeper and full child nurturer, but ideal friend and sexual playmate who appease the bruised spirits of the frustrated male returning from work.

In the light of this compensatory use of the Home, leisure, women and sexuality, we must ask ourselves seriously about the real meaning of that so-called quest for intimacy which grows all the more insistent in modern American life. Is the great burgeoning of encounter groups, of increased sexual frankness, or increasing preoccupation with the private sphere of deep inter-personal relations, that is so often fixated on heightened sexual expression—a quest which not only is not forbidden but is actively encouraged and even financed by churches, big business and even "enlightened" government agencies—is this really a part of the solution to a more humanized modern life? Or is this not an integral part of the pacification of alienated work and political relationships which sends us in a increasingly obsessive search for compensation in our private inter-personal lives?

Above all, does the encounter culture and its cult of freer sexuality offer any genuine liberation to women, or is it not a retooling of their roles as sexual pacifiers all the more? It is not notable that the entire world of encounter groups and the psychology on which it is based, like the earlier types of pyschotherapy, are fundamentally built on male sexism? Woman's segregation from active leadership roles is thus reinforced all the more, so that she may serve, in ever heightened form, this compensatory realm of private emotional release. I would suggest that as long as the quest for intimacy goes on primarily in this sphere as private leisure culture, it is a part of the sickness of our society and not a part of the solution. The true intimacy of dignified human beings should be the intimacy that goes on, not in an escapist flight from the real world of alienated work and power, but in the disciplined struggle of men and women together to criticize these false antitheses, to overthrow the walls between personal values and public culture, and to build a new human world.

THE ELLSBERG BREAK-IN

STEVEN V. ROBERTS

The findings of two volumes of grand jury testimony

Why did a zealous group of White House aides known as the "plumbers" break into the office of Dr. Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist on September 3, 1971?

President Nixon has maintained that the release of the Pentagon Papers by Dr. Ellsberg precipitated a crisis of "extreme gravity." The "plumbers" have said that the break-in was necessary to find out everything possible about Dr. Ellsberg, and the threat he posed to "national security."

But two volumes of grand jury testimony released here recently lend considerable weight to the charge, made by Dr. Ellsberg and others, that the burglary was also motivated by highly political considerations. In particular, it is argued, the White House wanted to uncover information that might "discredit" Dr. Ellsberg and other critics of the Vietnam war, including potential Democratic Presidential nominees.

The motivation behind the break-in has historical interest, but more importantly, four former Nixon aides have been indicted here for their roles in the bizarre event. The defendants intend to claim that their actions were justified by the requirements of national security, and the success of their defense could thus rest partly on what their real mission was.

The plumbers were organized shortly after the *New York Times* started publishing the Pentagon Papers in June, 1971. As President Nixon described the unit in his statement of May 22: "This was a small group at the White House whose principal purpose was to stop security leaks and to investigate other sensitive security matters." The main target was Ellsberg, the enigmatic, former Defense Department war hawk who admitted releasing the papers to the news media.

According to the grand jury transcript, the unit's original intention was to cull its information from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other government sources. After about a month, however, the two young hotshots who ran the group—Egil (Bud) Krogh and David R. Young— apparently decided they had to do better. John D. Ehrlichman, the Presidential aide who had overall charge of the group, has tried to claim that the FBI dragged its feet because Ellsberg's father-in-law, Louis Marx, was a buddy of J. Edgar Hoover. Marx has

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denied knowing Hoover, and the Ehrlichman version does not seem to hold up.

In any case, the decision was made to change the modus operandi of the plumbers. The group was authorized by Ehrlichman—and, the grand jury testimony indicates, by the President—to conduct "first party" investigations of a "covert" nature. Ehrlichman and Nixon both deny they ever authorized an actual burglary, but no adequate explanation has been offered for what else they could have meant by "covert." And both men insist that a burglary would have been permissible under the President's "inherent powers" to defend national security.

The plumbers had been born in an atmosphere of panic around the White House, and that sense of urgency—bordering on paranoia—continued throughout the summer. In describing why the plumbers were authorized to perform covert investigations, Mr. Ehrlichman told the grand jury:

"The setting of this was that no one seemed to know what Dr. Ellsberg's motives were, who his associates were, whether he was the agent of a foreign country, whether he was simply a citizen who was zealously concerned about the war; whether his conduct was aberrational, or what the cause of all this was.

"The Attorney General has informed the President that the Department of Justice was convinced that Ellsberg was part of a large conspiracy; and from time to time, individuals were identified as possible suspects in such a conspiracy. And so, at this particular point in time, it was felt very important to gain as definitive an understanding of Mr. Ellsberg's role in all of this, and what motivated it, as possible."

The plumbers were also particularly anxious to secure data that might be used to paint a "psychological portrait" of Ellsberg. This profile, prepared by the Central Intelligence Agency, was also to be used for "national security" purposes. But it apparently had a second purpose: to destroy Dr. Ellsberg's credibility with the public.

In an affidavit filed with the Senate Watergate Committee, Dr. Bernard M. Malloy, the CIA official who prepared the document, said he was told that its purpose "would be to render Dr. Ellsberg ineffective or to make him an object of pity as a broken man. Mr. Hunt [E. Howard Hunt, another plumber and convicted Watergate conspirator] expressed interest in being able to refer in a knowledgeable way to Dr. Ellsberg's oedipal conflicts or castration fears and other similar points." To further stress the point, Mr. Hunt told the grand jury here that the plumbers had gathered considerable data about Dr. Ellsberg's sexual habits, experiments with drugs, and other details about the "bizarre life" he supposedly led in Malibu, Calif. The peculiar xenophobia of the defense and intelligence community came through when Hunt noted with alarm that Ellsberg had even been known to consort with "foreign-born" women.

It is hard to see how Ellsberg's bed partners or "castration fears" related to national security. But they do relate to plans to gather, and publicize, damaging information about Ellsberg—a plan that apparently originated with the slipperiest of all Watergate figures, Charles W. Colson. In a telephone conversation with Hunt in early July of 1971, Colson said that the Ellsberg case "won't be tried in the court" but "in the newspapers." In referring to Ellsberg, the former special counsel to President Nixon said: "We might be able to put this bastard into a hell of a situation and discredit the New Left." In late August, Young wrote Ehrlichman a memorandum describing attempts to create "a very negative picture" around Dr. Ellsberg and the Pentagon Papers case. He also suggested that Ehrlichman ask Colson for a "game plan" for using any damaging information garnered by the "Hunt/Liddy Special Project No. 1," an apparent reference to the break-in which took place several days later.

"Prosecutability"

In addition to their plan to "render Dr. Ellsberg ineffective" through personal vilification leaked to their favorite columnists (usually Evans and Novak), the plumbers clearly had a political motive. In his grand jury testimony, Hunt said the break-in was intended to provide information about Ellsberg's "prosecutability." Asked what that meant by the grand jury here, Ehrlichman replied:

"There was every evidence that Mr. Ellsberg was going to use the occasion of a trial as a political platform; and I can recall a conversation in which it was opened to judgment as to whether from a political standpoint it would have been a good idea to conduct a prosecution which would be a political platform, would put the conduct of the war and Vietnamization and so forth in issue prior to the November election in '72."

Even more interesting is a memo from Young to Ehrlichman, which says that the Justice Department was seriously considering an indictment against three Ellsberg friends—Leslie Gelb, Morton Halperin and Paul Warnke—all former Defense Department officials. At least two of those men were advising Senator Edmund S. Muskie, the man considered by the White House as their strongest potential opponent. Since Ehrlichman specifically said that the break-in was partly designed to get information about Ellsberg's "associates," it seems clear that the burglars were hoping to be able to link the three friends to Ellsberg, and through them, to blacken Muskie. Why Gelb, Halperin and Warnke were never indicted is still uncertain. Probably the case against them was weak, and the government did not want to reveal any wiretaps on which they might have been overheard. But the evidence now seems to support the claim made

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by Ellsberg the day he appeared before the grand jury—that the plumbers had hoped to make him into a"mud-ball" with which they could "smear" his friends and Muskie.

DEUTSCHLAND UNTER ALLES

THE SCREEN

Every year the New York Film Festival reconfirms two things: that the French have become the greatest filmmakers in the world, and the Germans have become the worst. Why Festival director Richard Roud and his Selection Committee have chosen so many German films over the years remains a complete mystery. It even seems to have become a mystery for Roud himself, who confessed in the introduction to this year's Festival program, "Renaissance is a dangerous word: I employed the word a few years back about the German cinema, and with about three exceptions, it promptly folded up and died." Those three exceptions were represented, presumably, by the three German films shown at the Festival this year. But judging from the lone example I saw, all those other German films, the ones not as good as these, could only have been more vacuous if made without any film in the camera at all. (No, I take it back: an unloaded camera, as the old movie-critic's gag would have it, could only be an improvement).

Some insight into Roud's sensibilities can be gained from a book he once wrote on French director Jean-Luc Godard. One of the things these young German directors seem to have in common is being influenced by Godard; if you can call a shared misunderstanding an influence. Roud's problem, assuming Godard and the new German directors do go together somehow in his mind, is that he can't tell the wheat from the *schaft*. Yet perhaps a more profound mystery than why Roud keeps showing German films at the Festival is why those films are all so bad, and similarly bad. One cannot help feeling that, like other aberrations which have afflicted large numbers of Germans simultaneously, recent German filmmaking can be explained only by history.

The fact is that the French and Italian cinemas managed to escape complete destruction during World War II, but the German didn't. Postwar Italian filmmaking emerged from the Partisan movement almost immediately with films is like Zampa's *Vivere in Pace* and, of course, Rosselini's *Open City*. The New Wave of French directors emerged about a decade later from the *Cinémathèque Française*, whose collection Henri Langlois had managed to secrete from the Nazis. But the German film industry, and indeed German film culture in general, was effectively killed off by Hitler before the war began. Since the German cinema therefore had to be built up again from scratch, Germany's postwar directors have arrived on the scene, a dissolute band of war orphans, much later than their French and Italian counterparts. Maybe they have felt that the only possibility left to be original and achieve a "new look" was to do the the opposite of what the best directors elsewhere were doing, no matter what the artistic consequences. Such devastatingly programmatic thinking would at least go to show that, while nothing else may have survived the war, the Teutonic personality was still intact.

Whatever the reason for it may be, there is something fundamentally anti-cinematic about all these recent German films. It is as if their directors had agreed purposely to be as tedious and artless as possible. The one German film that I saw this year at the Festival was Jean-Marie Straub's *History Lessons*, an adaptation of a Berthold Brecht novel about the rise of Julius Caesar. In Straub's version a journalist listens to lengthy monologues by a series of people who knew Caesar way back when. In between these set pieces the journalist drives around a present-day European city in a little car with the camera staring fixedly over his shoulder. We know that the interviewer here is a Modern Man because he wears a shirt and slacks and Hush Puppies. We know that the interviewees are Ancient Men because they wear togas Straub picked up at an unclaimed railway baggage sale some time after the last Steve Reeves-Hercules movies were made. Straub's camera never moves. His editor never edits. His actors never act. Even Brecht's history lesson, as represented in the monologues, seems pointlessly ruminative and circular.

After an hour and a half of Straub, I couldn't face the other two German films being offered: Werner Herzog's *Land of Silence and of Darkness* and Rainer Fassbinder's *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant*. One can see built into the very premise of both these films that same Anti-Cinematism which distinguishes, or rather effaces, Straub's film. For all of its two-hour running time, *Bitter Tears* is set in a single room where some lesbians are having a quarrel. Herzog's film is shorter, but promises to paralyze script, camera and acting even more by being a biographical study of a fifty-six-year-old woman who is blind and deaf.

I consider myself a pretty hopeless movie junkie. I would gladly see a movie every day if I could, and have been known to sit through three different movies in one day. But a Werner Herzog movie once drove even me from a movie theater. I may be an addict, but I'm not a masochist. Ordinarily I wouldn't think it quite right to review a film I hadn't seen, but in this case it seems appropriate somehow: a purposely unknowing review for an intentional nonentity of a film. I would even go so far as to say that Herzog's new title, *Land of Silence and of Darkness*, describes perfectly the current prospect for the entire German cinema.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

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PSYCHOHISTORY OF A TRIAL

ISIDORE SILVER

The Briar Patch
MURRAY KEMPTON
Dutton, $7.95

"Future Shock" is a pervasive cultural affliction extending to the objects of our national paranoia as well as to other forms of environmental stress. We can barely recall now the wave of fear and revulsion that swept the country in the late '60's when the dread name and symbol "Black Panther" was invoked by J. Edgar Hoover and his votaries as a malevolent anti-social demon. Subsequent to such characterization, Bobby Seale ran for mayor of Oakland, Eldridge Cleaver "arrested" Tim Leary in Algeria (and promptly scuttled back into obscurity) and the New York Panthers went the desultory way of the "movement" generally. Only an author with the intellectual and moral force of a Murray Kempton can recall to us both the extent of that revulsion and the considerably less threatening reality and warn us (again) that "revolutionary" rhetoric in contemporary society is, at most, a reflection of the desperation with which the downtrodden respond to a powerful and implacable oppression.

Kempton's description of the 1970 New York trial of the Panther 13 (reduced from 21) for assorted alleged conspiracies to kill police and to blow up exotic institutions such as Korvette's and the Botanical Gardens is scarcely the stuff of which traditional "trial" best-sellers are made. Often, it is difficult to tell exactly what is happening; and there are no searing analyses of brilliant cross-examination or devastating summations to the jury. We learn nothing of "trial techniques" and we are mercifully spared the self-pompous arrogance of creeping Nizerism. Rather, Kempton provides us with a psychohistory of the trial, the disparate worlds of its participants (he omits comment upon the Genetish ability of the judge to conceive of himself as "The Court"), and, ultimately, of our bizarre culture. The grossest form of unreality is reached when presiding Justice Murtaugh compliments the former District Attorney of Kings County for his testimony about an informer's credibility just after "the distinguished witness explained that . . . he had presented to a grand jury a witness who had been in fifteen mental hospitals, certified his testimony to an appellate judge, got curious about his credentials only six weeks later, and, after finding out the worst, gone on paying him for the next month."

One's sense of depression is enhanced by the essential innocence (or rather, clash of innocences) of it all. The ineffable Justice Murtaugh displayed all the innocence of a man perfectly content with his lot in life and willing to accept the truthfulness of official institutions such as the police (Kempton recasts Holmes' dictum about judges so that they become "creatures of the felt necessities of the time just before the one when they sit"). Assistant District Attorney Phillips was totally incomprehensible of the cross-currents of incredulity and disbelief that first affected and finally dominated the thinking of the jury (which acquitted all of the defendants after twenty minutes of deliberation). Most dramatically—and most sadly—there was the innocence of both defense counsel and their clients, deriding and mocking and yet strangely bound to the forms and processes of a criminal justice system which seemed bent upon destroying them.

Perhaps the most credulous of all were the police officers of the Bureau of Special Services, the bureaucrats who compiled the "evidence" of the alleged conspiracy ("To Lieutenant Galante this disorderly troop had ordered itself merely by announcing its procedure. . . .). Of one defendant's confession, Kempton notes, "No policeman could have invented these naivetés . . . which could only be accepted in their awful portent by the better insulated, hence more susceptible imaginations of policemen at the level of inspector." Ironically, Kempton manifests a reasonable and proper degree of respect for the renegade black police officers (or at least one of them) who had infiltrated the Panthers and subsequently realized that while the cat may have had claws its revolutionary aspirations sadly lacked teeth. Detective Eugene Roberts—who didn't bother to report some of the defendants' "off the pig" statements to his superiors at BOSS "because Common Sense had not taken Fancy seriously enough to think [them] worth recording"—earns much less of the author's ironic detachment than do most of the characters in this comedy-drama. Thus, at one meeting where he was wired for sound, Roberts' "hints of derision toward the conspirators might well have been designed to tell his auditors with how little seriousness they ought to take the conspiracy. . . ." If so, the hint was not taken.

The clash in the courtroom was not between dedicated Maoist Panthers and brutal, lying cops but between the worlds of the orderly and the dispossessed. Each of the contenders evinced a certain "mind set" about the proceedings, and each was wrong—although, clearly, the Panthers were more justified in hewing to their limited perceptions. The gravest cruelty inflicted upon the defendants was not so much the physical one of unreasonably high bail (which kept most of them in jail for more than one year) but the gradually dawning realization that they were not the stuff of which true revolutionaries are made. (For in [district attorney] Phillips, Dharumba had at last found someone who believed that he was just

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as bad as he wanted to think himself"). In reality, the Panthers had been playing the ancient Harlem game of "Dozens" (sadly characterized by Kempton as the rhetoric of "agitations and proclamations that were the street's normal futilities"). The fantasy lives of the defendants is similar to, and reminiscent of, Luigi Barzini's description of the national psychosis of his oppressed countrymen, "The Italians."

The Panther trial was not just another "political prosecution," for there is none of the cynicism, the purposeful vengefulness, of Guy Goodwin's trips around the country to convene grand juries to harass white radicals. The defendants were accused of potentially heinous acts rather than the lesser and vaguer crimes usually charged against society's chosen enemies. Indeed, Kempton is concerned not with "political justice" but with the capacity of the criminal justice system to dehumanize all (especially blacks) who come into contact with it, with the adversary system's cruelty, and with the inability of the institutional representatives of the white legal and political system to comprehend what it is like to be a black man in this country.

Only the alert and commonsensical jury saw through the universal stereotypes propounded by the prosecution. These stereotypes were, of course, contradictory, for they depicted the black man as both revolutionary and idiot (to the extent that both Justice Murtaugh and DA Phillips believed that the irascible courtroom behavior of the refendants *had* to be caused by the promptings of their white lawyers). The ability of the jury to comprehend that there was no case (literally that) against the defendants is an intriguing testimonial to the fact that what may be grossly prejudicial attitudes toward groups tend to be replaced by finer distinctions at moments of crisis—when men must be judged individually for specific acts.

Sociologists have condemned the American criminal justice system for its acknowledged defects, and whatever sense (and however fleeting that sense) of self, of cohesion, even of reality the defendants may have acquired occurred despite, not because of, the barbarities of that system. As Kempton puts it, "Most of the dignity of courts depends upon the defendant's consent to his own humiliation" and his baleful description of what professionals term "the labeling process" (the systematic attempt to convince the defendant to identify himself as evil) remains long after we breathe a sigh of relief about the particular fates involved. What lingers on after the 156 acquittals is a sense that nothing has changed, that Justice Murtaugh will continue to expect undeserved fealty from those who have absolutely no reason to grant such to him (to Murtaugh, "the word is equivalent to the act, and . . . bad manners lead so implacably to bad deeds as to constitute the best evidence of them"), that prosecutors will continue to be bound to (and will bend every will to convince a jury to accept) their perceptions and stereotypes about reality, and that the fundamental failures of the system will not abate.

The criminal justice system is cruel; the adversary system which it encourages is also cruel; and these cruelties reflect the grosser social indecencies of our nation's moral universe. That the cruelties are engendered by the sort of innocence depicted by Kempton (the same innocence as that of the soldiers who had to burn that Vietnamese village "to save it") is irrelevant. For the greatest cruelty of all is that which is both masked by innocence and remains oblivious to the importunings of reality, experience, and common decency.

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REVIEWERS

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The Summer Before the Dark

DORIS LESSING

Knopf, $6.95

The Hothouse by the East River

MURIEL SPARK

Viking, $5.95

Life Signs

JOHANNA DAVIS

Atheneum, $5.95

RUTH PRIGOZY

Three new novels, by Doris Lessing, Muriel Spark, and Johanna Davis have much in common: against the background of contemporary society (which is, to a greater or lesser extent, a world gone mad), they explore the relationships of exceptional women with their immediate families. Amid pressures of home, husband, children, the heroines' pasts merge with events of twentieth century history as they try to reconcile their turbulent inner lives with an outer reality which the rational mind can only perceive as insane. Of the three, only Doris Lessing relentlessly strips away the layers of subterfuge that prevent a woman from discovering her buried, tormented self.

Kate Brown, an attractive 45-year-old wife of a prominent neurosurgeon and mother of four, is the heroine—in the best sense of the word—of *The Summer Before the Dark*. After twenty-five years of living "inside the timetable of other people's needs," she is suddenly faced with the future she has for years postponed. Her family is about to scatter for the long summer ahead, husband and daughter to America, sons to various parts of the world. Sitting in her carefully cultivated British garden, wrapped in a warm breeze that blows softly around her, Kate Brown feels the first rush of cold wind that signifies her dark, unknown future, "dwindling away from full household activity into getting old." No longer needed to provide her family

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with sympathy, order, efficiency, wholeness, she reluctantly accepts the offer of a translator's job with a multi-national group, Global Foods, which studies the world's food supplies as they affect poorer nations. The first step of the journey into her own inner darkness thus begins.

In an artistic opening chapter, Miss Lessing skillfully blends Kate's inner and outer life through a point of view that alternates between deep introspection and cool objectivity. Kate revisits her past as a desirable and docile young girl with her grandfather in Portugal, and ponders her present as a conventional household functionary. Her journey is a tortuous awakening from the married life of two intelligent, civilized creatures who talked everything out with a set of witty, ironical, and frank words which nevertheless concealed Kate's pain at her husband's frequent infidelities. Global Foods is the family writ large; her managerial skills and warmth secure her a glamorous executive position among beautiful, manicured people flitting luxuriously above the lives of direst privation that, paradoxically, serve as the focus of their endless conferences. For the crisis of a middle-aged woman, the prescription might be first, an exciting job, second a lover, preferably younger than she. Kate's next step is thus predictable. Her summer job ended, she accepts an offer to visit Spain with a 32-year-old American for whom, ironically, her value is greater as a listener than as a lover. Leaving the lovely Spanish seacoast, vulgarized and exploited by new tourist money, she and Jeffrey travel wearily inland where, in the heart of an old civilization, they are afflicted with a mysterious illness. Back in a London hotel, in the fevered days and nights which follow, Kate plummets to the raw center of her wounded self.

Strands of past, present, and future, so judiciously woven at the outset, coalesce in graceful symmetry in the last section, as Kate rents a room in an apartment shared with Maureen, young enough to be her daughter. Maureen's youth-crisis, like Kate's twenty-five years earlier, reflects Miss Lessing's cyclical view of human life which finds its correlative in contemporary history. Chaos and disorder still impel people and nations toward absolutes; private need conflicts with public hunger; personal entrapment mirrors social and economic enslavement; co-existing spheres of extreme poverty and vast wealth endlessly duplicate themselves.

The novel concludes affirmatively as Kate brings to an end the war between her outer self and long-buried feelings. Her recurring dreams, poignant and suspenseful throughout the novel, add a symbolic dimension to the main plot. Both dreams and reality are linked in a satisfying climax-resolution, as Kate's darkness finally recedes and she finds at last the sunlight of her real beginning. This is a fine novel, in its breadth, artistry, and wisdom; it has the power to touch all of our lives.

The madness in Muriel Spark's *The Hothouse by the East River* is symbolized by an overheated New York City apartment where the windows don't open and where the inhabitants' unchecked irrationality seems more coherent than the rampant chaos of the city outside. Through the lives of Elsa and Paul Hazlett, Miss Spark probes the disorder that daily assaults modern sensibilities. Admittedly, it has become increasingly difficult to make sense out of a violently changing world where holocausts seem commonplace, but the novel quickly falls into the imitative fallacy. Confusion is all; three-quarters of the way through the book, we no longer care about the series of unanswered questions that constitute the action: Is Elsa crazy or is Paul? Why does she cast her shadow toward the sun? Is the New York City shoe salesman Kiel, the German double-agent whom they had known in wartime England, now returned—with facelift—to destroy Paul? Had Elsa slept with Kiel long ago? What is real, 1944 when "life was more vivid," "when people were normal" amidst total chaos? Or the 1960s' when the most hopeful solution is either demolition or oblivion?

Miss Spark links contemporary madness with Manhattan, a "mental clinic where we analyze and dope the savageries of existence." In this "sedative chamber," Elsa's in-dwelling daemon, her "supernatural connection" is released, but absurdly, magic makes no difference where all existence has lost its meaning, where as Pierre, the son, notes, nothing matters, where there is no war and peace, good and evil, where the only area of conflict left is between absurdity and intelligence."

As the characters rattle around New York City, the confusion grows, in novel and reader alike. Elsa's statement, "What does it matter if he understands what we say, since we never say anything that matters" best describes the whole novel. A writer of Muriel Spark's gifts cannot but achieve brilliant moments—the psychoanalyst's scenes, the maid's breakdown, Pierre's avant-garde production of a geriatric Peter Pan. But they cannot compensate for the overall murkiness of this disappointing novel.

Life Signs, Johanna Davis' entertaining first novel, also recreates, but more realistically than Miss Spark's, the surface hum of New York City. Camilla Ryder, young, attractive, and neurotic, pregnant with her second child, starts to wake up at night, screaming. Her handsome, sober, and devoted husband, Alec, urges her to seek professional help which materializes in the person of Dr. Manos, a psychiatrist who fills her with pills to counteract what he diagnoses as a depression. From this point, Camilla's adventures resemble the diary of another mad housewife, as she forms a new friendship with a hippie couple (the wife who supplies more pills to offset the effects of the first batch, the husband who tries to seduce her), reconnoiters over her past, and gradually loses touch with reality.

Miss Davis writes smoothly and cleverly (if we overlook a few passages of romantic gush over Alec's looks and brains), and Camilla is thoroughly likable. Something goes wrong, however, halfway through the novel. After all, a "hugely pregnant," pill-popping, confused and disordered woman is a likely candidate for anything from minor ac-

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cident to total disaster. Our concern for Camilla is at odds with the author's determinedly cool, humorous narrative. And, although Camilla is endearing, her "specialness" too often consists in one-line wisecracks, disdain for convention, and cloyingly sentimental memories of college English courses and early efforts at poetry writing. The ending is forced; Alec dismisses Dr. Manos (the best character in the novel, drawn with sharply satirical precision), and accepts his wife's neuroticism as treasured zaniness. *Life Signs* has been affected by some of the fall-out from the women's liberation movement, but it evades the question of Camilla's acceptance of her role as wife and mother. After allowing Camilla a few fleeting doubts, Miss Davis settles her heroine back in the enclosing comfort of her husband's arms. Camilla still has Kate Brown's journey ahead of her, but it is doubtful that she will ever make it. Perhaps if she will read *The Summer Before the Dark*. . . .

The Human Face of God

JOHN A. T. ROBINSON

Westminster Press, $7.95

DAVID S. TOOLAN

"What think ye of Christ?" is not an urgent question for most of my students. Restless hearts are concerned about self-identity and vocation, intimacy and freedom, revolution and mysticism, and Watergate. Still, like "perfume from an empty vase," interest in Jesus lingers. A discussion of the image of Jesus in Webber and Rice's *Jesus Christ Superstar* will trigger immediate, telling reactions like this: A Jesus who could b sexually attractive, tempted, exasperated, and doubtful of his mission, is found "too human" and therefore blasphemous. Never mind the divine puppetry usually implicit in such 'orthodoxy,' it is content to replicate the Nicene formula detached from its historical context, little aware that in effect the magical expiator pre-empts our own spiritual drama. There is another reaction, however, coming from those alienated from the institutional church. They are attracted by a fully human Christ with whom they might identify, but instead of trusting that instinct as sound, they take it as another proof of their self-imposed excommunication.

Both reactors are betrayed, not enlightened, by the embalmed formulas of Nicea and Chalcedon. In the concrete, the linguistic rule of faith fractures what it was meant to join; consequently there is no awareness of the connection between Christology and the burning issues of the day. Doubtless this was not so for the contemporaries of Nicea and Chalcedon; to construct a Christology "from above," stressing the primacy of the divine disclosure in Jesus, made eminent sense—then. Today, however, that emphasis tends to freeze Christ like a fly in amber—which may well be signified by "prisoner in the tabernacle" thinking. Conceived in this fashion, faith in Christ ends as adherence to the dead hand of the past rather than to the living God. And in practice, this means that if any of this generation decide to take seriously the spiritual journey, they are virtually forced to renounce the church's 'Christ.'

The exodus is obviously well underway. Perhaps we are in for forty years of wandering in the desert where oriental modes of spiritual search will prove more appropriate to our expressive ethos than the tradition-centered modes of the West. If that is the case, then Robinson's admirable effort to untangle the conceptual confusions that bar the way to a realization of the news embodied in Jesus will be of interest only to professionals, and otherwise gather dust in the library of questions neither living, momentous nor forced. But perhaps the essential point is that whether we take the eastern "inward way" (an increasingly viable option for us) or the western reliance on the appropriation of crystallized wisdom (which Robinson's work supposes), the exodus myth is compatible with either. Such is the continuing power of this myth: to illuminate diverse paths to the ontological truth, and to deliver us from that nameless fear that with the dissolution of sacrosanct habits the center does not hold. I find that myth still works heuristically to extract signs of real (as opposed to magic) hope from our otherwise unpromising contemporary wilderness, and obviously Robinson finds it so too. Likewise, he argues the meaning of atonement, resurrection and parousia lies in the here and now; if we cannot see it so, then no remote transactions of the first century will save all our 'high' Christologies from beng a dead letter.

The only thing effectively demythologized by Robinson's exegetical craft is the untouchable Jesus, the god masquerading as man, who feeds all our secret contempt for, and despair of, the human. From the perspective of the hidden Gnosticism in us all, there is here a good deal of irreverent dismantling of the virgin birth and Christ's assumed pre-existence, but the irreverence is, I believe, therapeutic. Correctly understood, Robinson is no foe but a defender of the Chalcedonian creed, and clearly advocates no simplistic return to the mental horizons of the evangelists. In fact, his sensitivity and careful regard for all the relevant sources of interpretation is a thing beautiful to behold. What distinguishes his position is that, like the Catholics Hulsbosch and Schoonenberg in the Netherlands, he sets out to construct a Christology "from below," starting that is from the uncompromising evidence that Jesus was fully a man of our genes and blood. From there it becomes the task to understand how it can be that this "mere man" becomes for us the icon of God, not just a great man or prophet, but the definitive embodiment of God's true face toward man.

In the past, it had been thought necessary to attribute to Jesus an entirely unique ontological status in order to preserve the scriptural testimony that in him the very being and will of God were made manifest. But the necessity here rests on systematic philosophic preconceptions regarding the nature of God and man which are no longer compelling, and the price of adhering to them is demonstrably steep in the pastoral order. Robinson's own preconceptions, both theological and anthro-

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pological, are not beyond reproach, but I think he is right in judging that the gain in meaning is vast if we conceive of Jesus as different from us only functionally, but not in his metaphysical status as a man. We are then invited to view Jesus, not as the supreme freak of nature, but as the supreme exemplification of divine grace ceaselessly active in the cosmos. His uniqueness lies in representative service, not in exclusive privilege. This makes a great deal more sense, and represents an ecumenical gain of the first order. For the technician, of course, the conclusion smacks of Antiochene adoptionism. Robinson anticipates such objections, and argues, cogently it seems to me, that they do not apply.

Robinson's concern, he claims, is existential: how can I today truthfully and meaningfully confess 'Jesus is Lord.' If we take this seriously, that he is concerned with Kierkegaard's sense of truth, then this book must be considered prologue to a more ambitious project. For if we are to have light on how the meaning of Jesus becomes practicably the meaning of one's own life-story, in our specific cultural matrix, then the demand will be to suture together, doubtless with the aid of all our 'growth sciences,' the long-divided fields of ascetical praxis and Christological theory. Perhaps it stands as a measure of Robinson's success that his book should elicit such mind-bogglers.

The Off Off Broadway Book

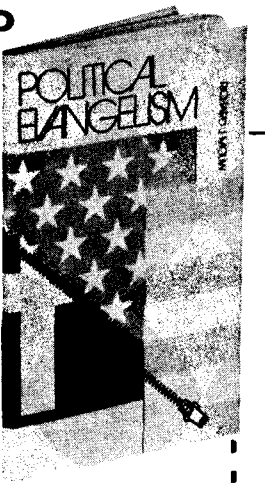
ALBERT POLAND &
BRUCE MAILMAN

Bobbs-Merrill, $20

GERALD WEALES

Off-off-Broadway is at once so extensive and so indefinite that it is difficult to conceive of a volume which could document the theatrical activity since the late 1950s, when the label, if not the phenomenon, was born. There are, for instance, more than sixty productions listed in the copy of the *Village Voice* I have around the house as I

What has religion to do with politics? or revolution?



POLITICAL EVANGELISM

by Richard Mouw

A minister has only to bring politics into the pulpit to be accused of departing from the gospel. Richard Mouw, however, insists that participation in current social and political issues is inherent in the very meaning of evangelism; which he defines as bringing the full power of the gospel into confrontation with sin, as manifest in all aspects of the created order . . . including politics.

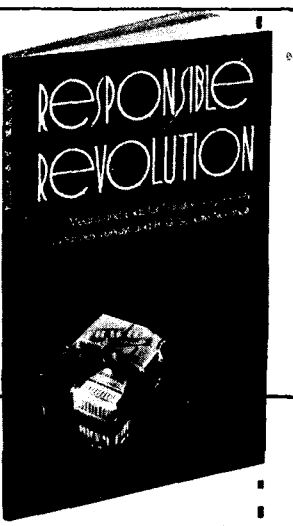
"Christians," he states, "must not opt for the political passivity which has often been the posture of culture-denying fundamentalism; nor must they engage in the mindless activism which has regularly characterized the stance of liberal worshippers at the altar of 'relevance.' These errors can be avoided if political involvement is firmly grounded in submission to the Word of God in obedience to the Lord of the Church."

Paper, $1.95

RESPONSIBLE REVOLUTION:

Means and Ends for Transforming Society

by Johannes Verkuyl and H.G. Schulte Nordholt



During the last thirty years, the world has seen some twelve hundred different revolutions: how should the church—and the individual Christian—respond to these social crises?

The authors analyze revolution from two perspectives: "The Response of Faith" and "The Fact of History." In the first part, Verkuyl suggests that the biblical message is one of neither evolution nor revolution, but rather of "Transformation." What is needed, he says, is a principle of "justified revolution" to replace the just war theory made obsolete by modern means of warfare.

Nordholt then looks at revolution within the context of contemporary history, and discusses such alternatives to violence as passive resistance, technological progress and education.

Paper, $1.95

160 **WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING CO.**
Grand Rapids, Mich.

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write this—a comparatively sparse offering for an average New York weekend. Most of them will probably draw only the friends of the performers; but there are, as usual, productions which are identifiable as part of the somewhat amorphous movement that broke out of its storefronts and basements and fed playwrights, directors, performers into the commercial New York theater, on and off Broadway, and out to the regional and university theaters. Off-off-Broadway has become an important—perhaps the most important—part of American theater in the 1960s and, for that reason, accurate documentation of its past would be a great help to theatrical historians as well as a great comfort to show-business buffs. Albert Poland and Bruce Mailman, off-Broadway producers with an obvious love for the off-off scene, have made a useful if unsuccessful stab at the job in *The Off Off Broadway Book.*

Their volume is primarily an anthology of thirty-seven plays by what can only be called the off-off-Broadway establishment figures. Although it leans heavily on La Mama— about a third of the plays come from Ellen Stewart's operation in one of its manifestations —it is a fairly representative collection of the best off-off-Broadway work and valuable for that reason. The fifty-odd pages of documentation consist of descriptions of producing organizations and the personalities—Joseph Cino, Al Carmines, Ellen Stewart—which give (or gave) them vitality, and lists of plays put on by the various groups. There is no attempt to do anything with the random off-off-Broadway productions and the listing includes groups like the American Place Theatre, the Negro Ensemble Company and Joseph Papp's Public Theater, which most people consider off-Broadway organizations. The lists are the most useful thing in this section of the book, but the obvious errors in the Introduction and the incomplete bibliographies of the various playwrights make me a little uneasy about accuracy; then, too, there is no mechanism that allows the reader to trace a playwright through the various groups without laboriously running down page after page of names.

The editors open their Introduction with a proclamation of sorts: "The plays in this book are different from all of the American theater which preceded them." That, of course, is nonsense. I am not thinking simply of the influences, admitted (by the playwrights in their biographical notes) and unadmitted, but by the general feel of the volume, the malaise that began to settle over me as I read my way from Joel Oppenheimer's *The Great American Desert* (1961) to Paul Foster's *Satyricon* (1972). It was a familiar feeling, one that I had difficulty defining until I recognized that the Poland-Mailman volume was just another variation on the *Best Plays* volumes that John Gassner edited for years. For comparison's sake, I went back to the first of the Gassner volumes, *Twenty Best Plays of the Modern American Theatre* (1939). Most of Gassner's playwrights, like most of the off-off-Broadway ones presented here, were in their thirties or forties, young playwrights of mature years; if the Gassner group was a little older, they, like their off-off counterparts, had mostly begun writing for the theater in their twenties and early thirties. With such obviously visible and audible figures as Julie Bovasso and Rosalyn Drexler on the off-off scene, the current theater may seem a little more open to women playwrights than the Broadway of old. Yet Gassner, with four women out of twenty-three playwrights, compares favorably with Poland and Mailman, who have seven out of thirty-seven; in fact, since one of those seven is Gertrude Stein, Gassner has a percentage edge on the side of women. There are, predictably, no black playwrights in the Gassner volume, but there are only three in the Poland-Mailman book, a small sampling for so busy a wing of the off-off movement.

My amateur playwright profile probably tells less about the similarity between the two volumes than generic comparisons would. The off-off-Broadway plays are obviously somewhat more blunt in language and in the direct presentation of sex than the earlier plays are, but the other innovations are somewhat old hat. Gassner's collection does not run to fantasy as much as the Poland-Mailman one does, but it is full of plays that break out of the conventions of realistic theater, and there is even evidence (*Bury the Dead*) that the 1930s was not as married to the three-act structure as the 1960s sometimes suppose it to have been. Both volumes contain funny plays, schmaltzy plays, teaching plays; both are deep in the idiom of their own time and both, although Poland and Mailman seem to think it is something new, make obvious use of the popular culture out of which they come. In fact, when it comes to playing games with Hollywood, Sam and Bella Spewack, in *Boy Meets Girl,* have it all over Ronald Tavel, in *Gorilla Queen.*

Finally, what the two volumes do is remind the reader that there are very few great playwrights around, that the American theater, now as always, has depended on playwrights, ranging from good to awful, who, in the voice of their time, turn out the standard, average, ordinary, respectable plays to fill the stages of their time. Although there are plays in the Poland-Mailman volume that I think are fine—notably Ronald Ribman's *The Journey of the Fifth Horse*—and interesting work by Sam Shepard, Israel Horovitz, A. B. Gurney, Jr., Leon Katz among others, I finally closed the volume, muttering, with Karma in *Gorilla Queen,* "Well, well, this play and interplay is rather dull, after all."

A Nation of Lords

DAVID DAWLEY

Anchor Press, $1.95

Locked-Out Americans

JOHN FRY

Harper & Row, $5.95

RALPH WHITEHEAD, JR.

The conservative Vice Lords and the Blackstone Rangers seem enough alike to be covered by a dime. They're huge

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black gangs, several thousand strong, products of the Chicago ghetto—the West Side for the Vice Lords, the South Side for the Rangers. They have worked (earnestly, perhaps) for several years to shake off their hoodlum tags in order to diversify into safer hustles, like the urban programs of the Great Society. Yet, they've found their respective paths blocked by Mayor Daley's policemen and prosecutors. Too, these gangs have inspired books for the season. David Dawley's for the Vice Lords, John Fry's for the Rangers.

Here, the similarities end. The books are altogether different. And the differences seem to owe far more to the authors than to the gangs themselves.

For Dawley, the Vice Lords' case falls snugly into the pages of the literature of youth crime—specifically, it fits the so-called opportunity theory. It says poor kids will naturally try to grab the main chance—money, kicks, identity, a chance to use brains or muscle. If this isn't offered to them by family life or the schools or the corporations, then the young people will take it wherever they can get it, even if this happens to be on the law's wrong side. "The gang was a family to all the street cats. The gang fed him, gave him initiative, responsibility, and respect, which the system didn't give him because he was born poor," writes Dawley. "Nothing was safe on the streets. (The Lords) would get money from liquor stores, liquor salesmen, clothing stores, dudes off the street, dope peddlers, pill pushers, barbecue places, stickups . . .—any way (they) could get it." And, as Dawley explains it: (The) qualities that make men company presidents and political leaders are also qualities that lead to success on the street, and if Horatio Alger (*sic*) had lived in the ghetto, he might have been a Vice Lord."

During the early 1960s, the gang leaders grew tired of the dangerous life. The West Side wars began to escalate. Fists and bricks and baseball bats gave way to firepower. "Guns came in with cats that couldn't fight and then everybody had to get a gun." TV series like *The Untouchables* promoted gang

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use of machine guns and sawed-off shotguns. The automobile, like the tank, altered the scale and tactics of street warfare. Many of the Lords were killed or badly hurt or sent to jail. Others drifted into the prosaic, but safe, rounds of work and family life. And, like aging gun slingers, the remaining gang chieftains kept feeling, at 30 or 35, the insistent pressure of reckless 15-year-olds challenging them for control of a street-corner or the nearby swimming pool.

Consequently, as opportunity shifted, so did the Vice Lords. In 1965, advance scouts for Dr. Martin Luther King came into the West Side. A few of the gang leaders were courted by them, since the Vice Lords could supply troops for SCLC's protest marches. The Lords were also beseeched at roughly the same time to lend their numbers to the letterheads of various fly-by-night black outfits. And the 1966 West Side riots compelled some of Chicago's ranking corporate executives to ask the gang for a dialogue. The Vice Lords soon became the toast of the West Side.

During the next few years, they developed an interesting portfolio. A soul boutique, a pair of frozen custard stands, a paper recycling plant, a cosmetics line, a street academy for dropouts, an Afro-arts gallery, a litter detail, youth centers, a tenants' rights bureau, junkets to youth conferences—these, as well as some one-shot promotions, were the projects the Lords planned. (Dawley helped them as a consultant.) Most of them never got farther than the memorandum stage, however.

For, Chicago's 1968 riots quickly dried up a good piece of the local market for social change schemes. Before, the Vice Lords could hold the ear of companies like Sears because the executives' fear of a riot gave some leverage to the gang. As soon as the business men saw the Vice Lords *couldn't* guarantee the peace, they knotted the purse strings of their corporate foundations.

Consequently, it became a lot harder for the gang to sell itself as a community organization. The Daley regime felt threatened by the Lords' attempt to get into neighborhood politics and service. The Mayor's publicity campaign against gangs, as well as some well-placed arrests and questionable prosecutions, tied up the Lords. They lost some of their long-standing leaders. It became even tougher for them to raise money. And the mystique of community organization began generally to lose ground anyhow.

Dawley's social welfarist line affronts John Fry. "Only literalist political schemers would see (the Rangers) as a community organization . . .," writes Fry, as he recalls the years the gang spent around the First Presbyterian Church, where he was pastor. "It is so clearly a brotherhood of brigands, fugitives, felons, no-goods, and cast-offs.

"The teacher spotted them as they first walked into the room, their mothers before, and the authorities soon after. Troublemakers, hellions, incorrigibles every one. . . . Tales of their violence make children whimper and grown men wet their pants."

For Reverend Fry, the Rangers are outlaws. They're the vanguard of a whole outlaw stratum—the underclass of the underclass, the *lumpen* of the *lumpen*. Apparently, Fry is suggesting the society splits up at least three ways. Two of these strata exist inside the economy: the self-supporting and the wards of the welfare state. The third falls outside the New Deal economy—Fry calls this stratum the lower-than-poor—and, consequently, cannot be controlled by the flow of wages and consumer goods and government These people are left to the police. Consequently, it isn't long before they get labeled as outlaws. This is what has happened to the Rangers, he thinks.

It's an interesting analysis. Yet, Fry doesn't take it anywhere. He prefers to groove on the Rangers, even if it means his tale will add to all those whimpers and damp pants. Too, he uses an awkward rhetoric as he does. It may owe something to Frantz Fanon or, perhaps, the early writings of Karl Marx. It's oblique and elliptical and it dresses up truisms and *non sequiturs* and tries to pass them off as paradoxes. It makes the book more trouble than it's worth.

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IN BRIEF

THEOLOGY OF PLAY, *by Jürgen Moltmann, with responses by Sam Keen, David L. Miller and Robert E. Neale, Harper & Row, $4.95.* Moltmann, the German who provided the "theology of hope" in the late 1960s, now extends the liberation theme to aesthetic experience in a world where the ethics and eschatologies lately offered as saving solutions have become

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part and parcel of the human dilemma. His 72-page essay, "The First Liberated Men in Creation," to which three Americans respond, begins with modern theology's standard recital of existential woes and moves to a Bonhoefferian definition of a "church for others," spreading liberation. Along the way, Moltmann uses the motif of play to describe how Christians must cherish celebration, avoid legalism and work for a humane society. Yet he has not written a "theology of play"; much less does he show theology *at* play, and Sam Keen's poetic rejoinder, "godsong," is justly angry as it lampoons turgid language about joy. As a footnote in the writings of an important theologian, the Moltmann essay is worth reading. Keen's poem is delightful. Forget the other two responses.

ELLIOTT WRIGHT

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CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 123)

people, God had prepared for her precisely the kind of affliction she was so meticulous in defining, and which might have been the dramatically logical end of her life: death ignominious, violent and incomprehensible, death in a Nazi crematorium along with other Jews. There she might personally have gained a knowledge of God which, she said, "is prepared for us on dead wood, geometrically squared, where a corpse is hanging." But Simone Weil's imagery is anachronous: the cross is no longer the instrument of the Passion. The concrete cell where zyclon gas billows down from the ceiling, efficiently choking hundreds of Jews in a moment, is the relevant medium. But she did not want to die a Jew's death, though they the same as Jesus were taken as "worse than common criminals." All the requisites of the kind of death she advocated, on paper, were by grace prepared for her, but she left in good time for America and England. A child on the road to extermination—it wept from utmost terror, it suffered without comprehending: perfect incarnation of Simone's prescribed martyr. She rejected that one. She was *the one* who hated the hanged, God, as they say, forgive her.

The tenderest things that might perhaps be said of Simone Weil are the words of S. Radhakrishnan pertaining to Hindus: they are, in his view, "strangers and pilgrims on earth," "fit for heaven but of no earthly use."

ELLIS BARNETT

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Steinfels (cont.)

So many conjurer's tricks: that's the sensation columns like "The Northeastern Elite" give me. But magic shows, complete with hissing and clapping, are good for kids' birthdays; adult political analysis demands something more.

Sincerely yours,

PETER STEINFELS

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